2. Revenue
3. Planning
4. Ocean Development
5. Space
6. Supply
7. Atomic Energy
8. Economic Affairs
9. External Affairs

10. Petroleum & Natural Gas
11. Sugar and Edible Oils
12. Steel
13. Legal Affairs
14. Personnel and Training
15. Bio-Technology
16. Science & Technology
17. Scientific and Industrial Research
18. Social Justice and Empowerment*

*Only 2% of the funds for SCD should be allocated to the NE. The norm of 10% of the total allocation should apply only w.r. to the allocation for sectors other than SCD.

Exemptions on Excise Duty on sale of Jute Bags

605. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Jute Mills have been exempted from payment of Excise Duty on sale of jute bags;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the quantum of loss that the Government have to incur as 100% foodgrain and sugar are to be packed in jute bags under Packaging Control Order;

(c) whether Government would withdraw this exemption particularly when the West Bengal Government continue to levy sales tax on these items; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) All jute and jute products were exempted from excise duty in the budget for 1997-98 to revive and give a thrust to the ailing jute industry.

(c) and (d) In view of the impending budget, it is not possible .to indicate any response.

Financial irregularities by M/s. Reliance Petroleum Ltd.

606. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that M/s Reliance Petroleum Ltd. have been indulging in financial irregularities in the Public Issue funds of their refinery project and complaints have been made to Government in this regards;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action, if any, has been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) The required information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Loan to Farmers

† 607. SHRI D.P. YADAV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to provide loan to the farmers on the pattern of the industries for purchasing land; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) Finance Minister during his meeting with the Chief Executives of Public Sector Banks on 14 November, 2000 emphasized the need to step up priority sector

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.